

Improving Your Vocabulary Using A Language Helper

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If you are already at an intermediate level in the language you're learning, and you want to improve your vocabulary using a language exchange partner, here is an idea you can try. Instead of trying to have a full 30 minute conversation in the target language, ask your partner to speak for 2-3 minutes about a specific topic, for example, what he did yesterday. Record your partner, and after he is finished speaking, replay the recording, pausing it every couple seconds to tell your partner what you thought he said and ask about any unfamiliar words or phrases. When you understand the meaning of the new word, replay that part of the recording again to make sure you understand the meaning of the sentence and make a list of these new words with their meanings. Going through the entire recording this way will probably take about 30 minutes. If you ask your partner about a word and then realize that you already know it, you of course don't need to write it down. Just replay the recording again so that you can hear the word again. In between sessions with your language partner, you should of course, review the recording and the list of new words and phrases. After a few times, you should be able to follow along and understand everything your partner said.

Note that this is not memorizing. It is visualizing and learning words in the context of actual speech.

You can continue this process with your language partner for many different subjects to improve your vocabulary. Daily life, food, culture, politics, philosophy, science. The topics are endless. You can talk about anything! However, you might find it easier to progress from easier, more predictable subjects (e.g., "yesterday") to more interesting but abstract and complicated subjects (e.g., "politics"). You can ask your language partner to include slang, idioms, proverbs, etc. into their speech to help you with vocabulary in those areas, too.

So what are you waiting for? Find a language partner and get started enhancing your vocabulary today!